

Message Text

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TO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA PRIORITY

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: SHUM

SUBJECT: LONDON TIMES ARTICLE ON ETHIOPIAN "RED TERROR"
CAMPAIGN

1. EMBASSY REQUESTED TO COMMENT ON ACCURACY OF ARTICLE
REPEATED BELOW WHICH CARRIED IN MARCH 22 ISSUE OF THE
LONDON TIMES UNDER HEADLINE, "CHILDREN SHOT DEAD AFTER
TERROR". ARTICLE WRITTEN BY HANS EERIK.

2. IT IS OUR IMPRESSION THAT THE STORY DRAWS ON REPORTS OF
INCIDENTS WHICH MAY HAVE OCCURRED OVER A CONSIDERABLE
PERIOD OF TIME AND FOR THAT REASON MAY NOT BE AN ACCURATE
REFLECTION OF THE CURRENT SITUATION. IN ANY EVENT WE
WOULD APPRECIATE YOUR BEST ESTIMATE OF THE TOLL OF "RED
TERROR" VICTIMS KILLED, TORTURED AND IMPRISONED IN URBAN
AND RURAL AREAS SINCE CAMPAIGN LAUNCHED IN LATE 1977.

BEGIN TEXT - QUOTE - RED TERROR, OPENLY INCITED BY THE
ETHIOPIAN GOVERNMENT, HAS GONE THROUGH ADDIS ABABA LIKE A
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FURY. ON THE NIGHT ON WHICH I AM STARTING THIS DIARY, A
HUNDRED PEOPLE OR SO, INCLUDING MANY CHILDREN, WILL DIE, AS
ON EVERY OTHER NIGHT, I ASKED A FRIEND WHETHER THE IMAM OF
THE GREAT MOSQUE WAS WELL. NOT AT ALL, MY FRIEND REPLIED
AND TOLD ME THAT SOME DAYS AGO, ONE OF THE FIVE KNOWN
OFFICIAL MURDER SQUADS KNOCKED ON THE IMAM'S DOOR AND
ASKED FOR HIS 14-YEAR-OLD SON.

WITHOUT ANY EXPLANATION THEY TOOK THE BOY AWAY. THEY
RETURNED HIS BODY AFTER FOUR HOURS DISFIGURED BY TORTURE,

THE EYES GOUGED OUT AND THE BODY BURNT BY ELECTRIC SHOCK.

THE IMAM WAS ORDERED TO LEAVE THE BODY WHERE IT WAS DUMPED BY THE SQUAD IN THE STREET ON PUBLIC DISPLAY. FOUR HOURS LATER THE SQUAD CAME BACK, PICKED UP THE BODY AND TOOK IT TO SOME MASS GRAVE. A FEW DAYS LATER ANOTHER SON WAS TAKEN AWAY. HE IS STILL ALIVE IN JAIL.

THERE ARE MANY CASES OF CHILDREN BEING ARRESTED AND BEING RETURNED BY THE HENCHMEN AFTER A FEW DAYS. THE CHILD IS THEN ORDERED TO POINT OUT THE PARENTS' HOME, AND THE PARENTS IN THEIR TURN HAVE TO POINT TO THE CHILD'S BED. THE CHILD IS THEN ORDERED TO GO TO BED AND IS SHOT IN FRONT OF THE PARENTS.

IN MOST CASES, HOWEVER, CHILDREN AS WELL AS ADULTS ARE BEING DRIVEN OUT OF PRISON EARLY IN THE MORNING. IN FRONT OF THEIR HOME THEY ARE ORDERED TO GET OUT AND ARE SHOT. USUALLY A NOTE IS ATTACHED TO THE BODY WITH A NAIL, GIVING SOME PRETEXT FOR THE MURDER.

TEN DAYS AGO AT THE TIME OF EVENING PRAYERS, SUCH AN EXECUTION SQUAD STOPPED OUTSIDE ONE OF THE SMALLER LIMITED OFFICIAL USE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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MOSQUES IN THE NORTHERN PART OF THE ADDIS ABABA MARKET PLACE. WHEN A MAN OVER 75 YEARS OLD OPENED THE DOOR OF THE MOSQUE AND ASKED THE NEAREST SOLDIER WHETHER THE CONGREGATION COULD GO HOME AS THE PRAYER WAS FINISHED, THE SOLDIER HIT HIM IN THE FACE AND THREW HIM TO THE GROUND. HE THEN SHOT INDISCRIMINATELY INTO THE MOSQUE. THERE WERE AT LEAST 25 DEAD.

THE SOLDIERS THEN TURNED TOWARDS A HOUSE NEXT DOOR, BEAT A PREGNANT WOMAN IN IT AND INQUIRED ABOUT HER HUSBAND. WHEN TOLD THAT HE HAD NOT YET RETURNED FROM WORK THEY LINED UP HER THREE CHILDREN ALONG THE WALL AND WERE JUST ABOUT TO SHOOT THEM WHEN AN OFFICER TOLD THEM TO STOP.

WHEN THE CONGREGATION FINALLY EMERGED FROM THE MOSQUE, THEY BROUGHT MANY OF THEIR WOUNDED WITH THEM, BUT THE HOSPITALS REFUSED TO TAKE THEM ON THE GROUND THAT THEY WERE ANARCHISTS AND REACTIONARIES, SUPPORTING THE FEUDALISTS AND IMPERIALISTS. BECAUSE OF THIS ANOTHER TEN PEOPLE DIED OF THEIR WOUNDS.

THE SWEDISH AND NORWEGIAN AMBASSADORS WENT TO THE FOREIGN MINISTER TO PROTEST AGAINST THE MURDERS. THE MINISTER STARTED SHOUTING AT THEM, ACCUSING THE GOVERNMENT OF SOUTH AFRICA OF CRIMES IN THAT COUNTRY AND THE UNITED STATES OF HORRORS IN VIETNAM.

I AM WRITING THIS AT ADDIS ABABA. THE CITY IS DIVIDED INTO 300 SUB-DISTRICTS, EACH OF WHICH HAS A PRISON AND ARMED GUARDS ROAMING ABOUT. THE AUTHORITIES IN THE SUB-DISTRICTS ARE ENTITLED TO TAKE WHAT IS CALLED "REVOLUTIONARY MEASURES", THAT IS TO KILL.

THE PRISONS ARE FULL. PEOPLE ARE BEING PICKED UP INDISCRIMINATELY AND SHOT. IF EACH SUB-DISTRICT HAS ONLY ABOUT EIGHT TO TEN ARMED GUARDS, THIS MAKES A TOTAL OF LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
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SOME 3,000 AUTHORIZED KILLERS. THERE ARE MOREOVER OFFICIALLY APPOINTED MURDER COMMANDOS.

YOUNG MEN OF A SUB-DISTRICT ARE OFTEN ORDERED TO HEAD OFFICE. THEY ARE PUT INTO PRISON AND THEN EITHER SHOT OR OCCASIONALLY ONLY INTERROGATED AND SENT HOME. THE PARENTS OFTEN ARE FORBIDDEN TO MOURN AND TO HOLD THE TRADITIONAL MOURNING CEREMONIES.

APART FROM THE SUB-DISTRICT PRISONS, THERE ARE THE BIG GOVERNMENT JAILS. THEY ARE BEING FILLED INDISCRIMINATELY WITH VICTIMS OF MALICIOUS DENUNCIATIONS. EVERY NIGHT THE OFFICERS IN CHARGE OF THESE PRISONS RECEIVE LISTS OF NAMES AND HAVE THEN TO DECIDE HOW TO DISPOSE OF THE PRISONERS.

SOME ARE GIVEN THE CHANCE OF LIVING ANOTHER DAY, OTHERS ARE BEING LOCKED UP FOR A WHILE AND THEN TAKEN BY LORRY INTO THE STREETS WHERE THEY ARE PUBLICLY SHOT. ABOUT 100 OR 150 PEOPLE ARE BEING KILLED IN THAT WAY EVERY NIGHT.

PEOPLE IN ETHIOPIA ASK WHAT ARE THE INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS DOING, MANY OF WHOM HAVE OFFICES IN ADDIS ABABA. THEIR OFFICIALS ARE DRIVEN IN LIMOUSINES PAST THESE CORPSES, THEY HEAR THE SHOOTINGS AND THEN THEY GO ON DRINKING WHISKY AT PARTIES.

THE GENERAL OPINION HERE IS THAT THE RUSSIANS ARE FORCING THE ETHIOPIANS TO KILL THEIR COUNTRYMEN. THEY HAVE BEEN TOLD THAT ONLY BY RED TERROR CAN THE WILL OF THE PEOPLE BE BROKEN AND ALL BE FORCED TO BECOME COMMUNISTS. SOME HAVE BEEN BROKEN, BUT MANY MORE HAVE BECOME MENTALLY DERANGED.

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THE TALK OF A NON-POLITICAL CHURCH MUST SEEM UTTERLY

ABSURD IN THE FACE OF THE HORRORS COMMITTED HERE. SUCH TALK IS A SIN AGAINST THE HOLY GHOST.

WE HEAR SHOTS; WE SEE AND HEAR AT REGULAR INTERVALS, THE HUGE RUSSIAN FREIGHT AIRCRAFT. SOME PEOPLE WHISPER TO ME THAT IN THEIR SUB DISTRICT 300 YOUNG PEOPLE WERE ARRESTED LAST NIGHT, PERHAPS 80 IN ANOTHER SUB-DISTRICT. BUT NOBODY DARES TO SAY THAT ALOUD.

IN ONE FAMILY, FATHER, MOTHER AND ALL THE OLDER CHILDREN WERE ARRESTED, BUT THREE SMALL CHILDREN, UNDER THE AGE OF SIX WERE LEFT BEHIND. NONE OF THE NEIGHBOURS DARES TO TAKE CARE OF THEM AS THIS WOULD AMOUNT TO A DEATH SENTENCE. TO HELP THESE CHILDREN WOULD BE AN ACT OF CHRISTIAN COMPASSION; YET IT WOULD ALSO BE A POLITICAL ACT OF DARING.

PASSING MEXICO SQUARE WE SEE THREE CORPSES AND MUCH BLOOD. NEXT TO THE CORPSES ARE THE USUAL NOTES. AS WE REACH THE CHURCH PEOPLE TOUCH THE CHURCH WALLS WITH THEIR LIPS, HANDS AND FOREHEADS-AND PRAY SILENTLY.

AFTER THE SERVICE A FRIEND TOLD ME THAT HIS DAUGHTER WAS ARRESTED LAST FRIDAY. THREE HUNDRED PEOPLE WERE THROWN INTO THE DISTRICT JAIL THAT NIGHT. THEY HAD TO SIT ON THE BARE FLOOR. IF ANYONE DOZED OFF HE WAS IMMEDIATELY ASSAULTED AND CALLED ANARCHIST, FEUDALIST, AND EXPLOITER OF THE PEOPLE. OF THE 300 NO FEWER THAN 56 WERE EVENTUALLY TAKEN AWAY AND SHOT IN THE STREETS.

THE SERMON IN THE CHURCHES SHOULD BE ABOUT THOSE VIOLENT DEATHS WHICH EVERYONE SEES IN THE STREETS-BUT WHO DARES? WHEN I RETURNED FROM THE SERVICE IN THE AFTERNOON I SAW AT MANY DOORS AND GATES LARGE POSTERS READING "THE RED LIMITED OFFICIAL USE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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TERROR SHALL FLOURISH". WOE TO AN OWNER WHO DARES TO REMOVE A POSTER WHICH IN FACT ANNOUNCES HIS OWN IMPENDING MURDER.

THE IMAM AT THE GREAT MOSQUE WAS HIT AND FELL TO THE GROUND SEEMINGLY DEAD. BUT LATER HE RECOVERED. WHEN THE MILITARY GOVERNMENT HEARD OF THIS THEY INVITED HIM AND EXPRESSED REGRET. HE WAS TOLD: "IT IS NOT TERRIBLE THAT ANARCHISTS SHOULD HAVE STORMED YOUR MOSQUE AND KILLED SO MANY INNOCENT PEOPLE?

THE OLD IMAM REPLIED: "IN OUR DISTRICT THERE ARE NO ANARCHISTS. YOU HAVE DONE THIS, BUT WHY? THERE WERE ONLY POOR AND SIMPLE PEOPLE IN THE MOSQUE STANDING THERE WITH

THE KORAN IN THEIR HAND. WE PRAYED FOR RAIN AND FOR

BREAD, YET YOU HAVE KILLED 50 OF THEM. WHY?"

HE RECEIVED NO REPLY AND WAS ALLOWED TO GO HOME. BUT THE
NEXT DAY HE WAS TAKEN AWAY AND HAS NOT BEEN HEARD OF SINCE.

TODAY THERE WERE AGAIN MANY CORPSES IN THE STREETS. THE
RED TERROR IS NOT ONLY PROCLAIMED IN POSTERS AND LEAFLETS
BUT ALSO ON THE RADIO. TODAY WE WERE TOLD THAT OUR
DISTRICT LEADER IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE POLITICAL INSTRU-
CTION IN SCHOOLS. MEMBERS OF THE POLITBURO ARE TO
EXPLAIN TO CHILDREN HOW TO APPLY THE RED TERROR: EVERYONE
IS ENJOINED TO DENOUNCE A NEIGHBOUR WHO IS OPPOSED TO THE
REVOLUTION.

THE MAYOR OF ADDIS ABABA SAID TODAY THAT IN SOME FOUR OR
SIX WEEKS THE RED TERROR WOULD HAVE CLEANSED THE CITY OF
THE OPPONENTS OF THE REVOLUTION. THEN IT WOULD BE THE
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TURN OF THOSE WHO ARE NEUTRAL.

DISTRICT GUARDS VISIT CHURCHES AS WELL. UNABLE TO READ
AND WRITE, THEY INSIST ON HAVING PASSAGES FROM THE LITURGY
AND THE BIBLE READ OUT TO THEM FOR IDEOLOGICAL CLEARANCE.
THE PIANO IN THE CHURCH SEEMS PARTICULARLY SUSPECT: THEY
ARE CONVINCED THAT IT IS A RADIO OF THE CENTRAL
INTELLIGENCE AGENCY. THEY OPEN IT AND FIND IT FULL OF
WIRES.

BLOOD FILLS THE STREETS. MOTHERS ARE DEMENTED WITH WORRY.
BUT WORRY IS NOT THE RIGHT WORD. IT IS A CONCENTRATION OF
ALL THE SENSES ON ONE QUESTION: WHEN WILL IT BE THE TURN
OF MY CHILD, WHEN WILL ITS BODY BE PLACED IN FRONT OF MY
DOOR.

THE BLOOD IN THE STREETS IS THICK LIKE OIL. IT DOES NOT
DISAPPEAR. AT TIMES A NOTE MAY APPEAR NEXT TO A CORPSE
SAYING: SORRY, THIS KILLING WAS DUE TO A MISTAKEN
IDENTITY.

SOME PRIESTS OF THE ORTHODOX CHURCH ARE TRYING TO COME TO
TERMS WITH THE REGIME AND TO MAKE ARRANGEMENTS WITH THE
RED TERROR. THE POLITBURO WANTS THE CHURCH AND THE
ISLAMIC AUTHORITIES TO CONVENE A SEMINAR TO DETERMINE THE
CORRECT POLITICAL ORIENTATION.

A PRIEST CALLED SOLOMON, WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR SHOA PRO-
VINCE, HAS VOLUNTEERED TO CONVENE SUCH A CONFERENCE.

EVERYBODY KNOWS WHAT THIS MEANS: THE LEADERS OF THE CHURCH
ARE TO LEARN MARXISM-LENINISM AND TO AGREE TO IT. IT IS

THEIR DUTY TO CONDONE AND TO EXPLAIN THE MEASURES OF THE
GOVERNMENT AND TO APPROVE THE RED TERROR AND THE CONDEM-
NATION OF THE SOMALIS.

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MR. SOLOMON AND ONE MUSLIM COLLEAGUE OF HIS, MR. AHMAD
SHAFI, WERE IN MOSCOW LAST YEAR AT THE GREAT PEACE
CONGRESS, REPRESENTING THE CHRISTIANS AND MUSLIMS OF
ETHIOPIA.

VISITORS WHO COME HERE AND LEAVE QUICKLY CAN NEVER FIND
OUT WHAT IS REALLY HAPPENING.

WHEN THE PRESENT HEAD OF STATE HAD KILLED THREE OF HIS
PREDECESSORS AND THEN TURNED TO HIS FELLOW-CHAIRMAN, THE
NEWSPAPERS HAD TO SAY: COLONEL ATNAFU HAD TO DIE BECAUSE
HE PUT THE ETHIOPIAN PEOPLE ABOVE IDEOLOGY; HE VALUED THE
WELL-BEING OF THE PEOPLE MORE HIGHLY THAN THE APPLICATION
OF SCIENTIFIC SOCIALISEM.

THE TORTURES RESORTED TO IN THE SUB-DISTRICTS ARE HORRIBLE.
THE METHODS AND THE ENTIRE SYSTEM HAVE BEEN TAKEN OVER
FROM EASTERN EUROPE AND PARTICULARLY EAST GERMANY. THE
SECRET SECURITY OFFICE IS LED BY A GENERAL FROM THE GERMAN
DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC.

THE RECRUITMENT OF THE PEASANTS FOR WAR ON TWO FRONTS HAS
PRODUCED FAMINE AND DISORDER. UNIVERSITY TEACHERS AND
STUDENTS WERE TRANSPORTED YESTERDAY TO THE HARVEST IN THE
AWASH VALLEY.

WHEN THE LESSON WAS READ IN CHURCH LAST SUNDAY, A WOMAN
COLLAPSED IN THE CENTRAL AISLE AND STARTED CRYING ALOUD.
THERE WAS HARDLY ANYONE IN THAT CHURCH WHO WOULD NOT HAVE
WANTED TO JOIN THE CRYING-FOR A SON OR A BROTHER OR A
FATHER OR A DAUGHTER OR A MOTHER, FOR ALL THOSE TENS OF
THOUSANDS WHO HAVE BEEN TORTURED AND KILLED.-QUOTE - END

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TEXT. CHRISTOPHER

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